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Week 41: Rescue LIFE

Randy Robison and Tammy Trent

Rene Martinez

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Randy Robison. Tammy Trent is with me. And Tammy, you weren't here about five years ago, seven years ago when Rene Martinez was first on the show, were you?

**TAMMY:** No I wasn't but I'm going to tell you thinking about this show today, I went back and started Googling a bunch of stuff and I am beyond excited that he is here with us today.

**RANDY:** And I'm excited for you to be with us. If you haven't heard his story it is going to bless you. In fact, I was telling Rene before the program that I still see comments on YouTube from people who have watched us over the years. It's just having an impact. Man, what God does in our lives, just the ripple effects just keep going out forever. So glad you're here. Rene Martinez, welcome back to *Life Today*.

**RENE:** Thank you for having me.

**RANDY:** Now I know I set that up a little bit. You told the story when my parents were on the set. But a lot of people haven't heard where you came from to appreciate all that God's done in your life. Briefly walk us through how you grew up and got to a place that was dark.

**RENE:** Amen! Well, see, growing up, I didn't have a dad, a father figure in my life. My mom back then was into drugs and she was into this dark religion called Santeria. I remember being about five years old and they were killing these chickens and they were pouring the blood down the kids' heads. I knew I was next and so I ran and tried to hide under a couch. They grabbed me from under the couch and they stuck me in this bathtub where there was a goat. They sacrificed the goat and they poured the blood all the way down my body. Immediately, it opened some kind of door in my life. I started to see demons. They held me down in my sleep. It was like—it was just crazy for me to be at such a young age and to experience all this.

So my mom was always getting high as well. So I got led to the streets at a very early age and found family on the streets. Nine, ten years old, we're stealing cars, we're breaking into houses, we're spray painting on walls. One night, I was 14 years old, when we stole a car and got into a high-speed chase. And we're flying through red lights. Next thing you know, my whole life blacks out. I woke up weeks later with all my bones broken. I was facing manslaughter charges. I had to learn how to walk again.

And I didn't learn my lesson. I went right back to the streets. Started gang bang again and started to rob again. Next thing you know, I got caught up with attempted murder charges at 16. And after that, I got sent to a facility and then I got out. I remember right before I caught those charges we were in a situation where me and my mom were homeless. My mom was so depressed that she tried to commit suicide for the second time in her life and I found her half dead.

So what did I do? I ran and I grabbed the phone. I called 911. They came and picked her up. She goes to the hospital, comes out of the hospital, and ends up getting invited to a church retreat. Her whole life changed. I'm talking about three days. Her whole life changed. She comes back talking about Jesus to me. And I'm like, this lady is crazy! What do you mean Jesus? I didn't understand because I was used to the witchcraft and her getting high.

So I just ran from God my whole life. By the time I was 17, I became the leader of one of the most notorious biggest gangs in Miami-Dade County and I just ran the streets. And I was just lost my whole life. Many nights I found myself fighting for my life, half dead. Beat down one time, left for dead, blood in my brain. I've had guns jammed in my head. They've had hits on me. I've been in cars riddled with bullets multiple times. And that was my whole life. In and out of jail, hospitals, and funerals, it was like a normal thing, a normal life. And it's like I never learned my lesson.

I'm going to fast-forward to 2003, I had a friend. He kept inviting me to this church. He's like, "Oh, come on! Let's go to this church." Long story short I'm like man, I'm not with that church stuff but he ends up convincing me. So I walk into this church, I'm sitting down and the pastor, he was preaching on gangs. And for the first time in my life, I felt God tugging at my heart. Because throughout my whole life after my mom tried to commit suicide, all she was doing was praying for me. So God heard her prayers because I'm in this church and I'm feeling God tugging at my heart. I'm like, man, why do I feel like this? I didn't understand.

At the end, he called people up for prayer. My friends hits me on the shoulder. He's like, "Come on. Let's go up there." So I'm walking up. It's like, it was like I was walking but it wasn't me. I don't know how to explain it. As I'm getting closer to the front, I'm balling my fist up and I'm clenching myself hard. I'm like I ain't soft because I felt like I was going cry. I'm like I ain't soft, I ain't soft, and I just broke down crying like a baby. And then two or 3 days later, I ran from God because I didn't know how to let that image go. I was the leader of a gang. I had all this rank in Miami. I was calling shots. I was doing so much that I just didn't know how to let that image go.

A year later, I met this guy named Kimbo Slice and they were doing bare-knuckle fights in Miami. So one of my friends was fighting for him. I'm like "Man! I want to show them what I've got. Man, talk to him for me."

And I ended up going to the backyard, knocked the first guy out in seven seconds. And I

kept fighting and winning. And my name got so big in the underground bare-knuckle circuit that Telemundo came and they wanted to do a story on my life in Spanish.

They said, "We want you to become a professional M.M.A. Fighter."

I'm like, "I ain't never trained." I said, "If you pay for my training, I'll fight."

And they paid for my training, six months later, I'm fighting professional. With six months of training, jumped in a cage, and fought a guy from Thailand who had 127 fights. I beat him. And it was like my name kept getting bigger and bigger.

I started a gangster rap label because some of my friends rapped. And I said, "We're real gangsters." I said, "We could rap, we could spit this because we lived this." That was my mentality. The devil had me so blind—so blind. I said we're going to make all these millions. I was so blinded by the things of the world. So I was connected with celebrities. I had the money, I had the fame, I had all that. But I was so empty inside and I was mad at the world. I had so much rage inside of me because of growing up without a dad and a father figure. I just had so much anger in me.

And this one night I was in a garage and I felt the demon of death calling me. For the first time in my life, I thought about hell. Other times I left my house I would be like man, I wonder if I'm going to make it back home. But I didn't care—I didn't care. And it was like this one night it's like I had a spiritual awakening. For the first time in my life, I thought about hell. And that's when the Lord spoke to me. And he spoke to me, it wasn't like a loud audible voice in the sky, it was something within me. He said I spared you for such a time—either you come now or I'm going to remove my hedge off of you.

My whole life flashed before my eyes and I surrendered it all to the Lord. And I remember after that, I'm walking down the street to feed the homeless. I just wanted to give back because God saved me from so much. I was homeless at one time. So I'm walking to feed the homeless and there is a guy on the corner with a big Jesus shirt on.

I'm like, "Man, I like your shirt, homey." That's what I said. "I like your shirt, homey."  
Just like that.

He's like, "Praise God." He said, "Where are you going?"

I said, "I'm going to go feed the homeless. We've got food on the other side of the block."

He came with me and when he started to preach the word, I felt the Spirit of God speaking out of his mouth. And he told me, "Brother, you must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." And April 10th, 2016, I'm in South Beach Miami, Florida and I went down into water in the name of Jesus Christ. And when I came out of that water, I got filled with the Holy Ghost. I've never been the same. I've never been the same!

He just put His Word in me now and it is like I just go from state to state, prison to project, everywhere preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's it. This is all I'm going to do for the rest of my life.

**TAMMY:** What year was that? 2016?

**RENE:** That was 2016, April 10th. My whole life was changed forever. I've never looked back.

**TAMMY:** Did he break you then also of the anger that you felt in your life?

**RENE:** See everything! Everything! It was like I know for a fact that I was controlled by a demon. I know it. And the day I went down in the water—as I was walking to the water, I was talking to the Lord from the inside of myself. I'm like, Lord, remove all these things from me. I don't want them anymore. He heard me. It says he hears a true broken and contrite heart. I truly repented with a true godly sorrow. And when I went down in the water I came out of that water, I got filled with the Holy Spirit. And I started to learn

that word, hallelujah. I ain't never been the same.

**RANDY:** You know what I love about seeing you again here? Is that the Rene Martinez, we called you "Level" because that was your street name but you don't go by that anymore because God's given you a new identity.

**RENE:** A new name! A new life. A new identity.

**RANDY:** But what's happened since then?

**RENE:** Just going forth since that day I've gone to Los Angeles, I've gone to Atlanta, I've gone to New York, Philadelphia. It is like the Lord sends me to these spots. And I go in there and I go in the ghettos and the project and the prisons. I came from nothing. I came from the gutter. I came from gang-banging. I seen murder my whole life. So I know that if God didn't allow me to die back then when I was with the devil, I know he has me here for a specific mission. And it's just by the power of the Holy Spirit that I can do this. It ain't even me.

I just walked into a prison, it was over here in Texas, and the guy was telling me, because they had seen my documentary, and he was like, "Man, you give me so much hope. You give me so much hope to see that if God did this for you, he could do this for me." I'm like wow! What a blessing.

**TAMMY:** Building back the walls of hope.

**RENE:** Building back the walls of hope brick by brick, line upon line.

**TAMMY:** Something I would not be able to do, Rene. It is within me but God has called you for such a time as this to go into places that I don't know if I'd survive. I'd hope so but I'm so grateful for mighty men of God whose lives have been transformed. And you're going into the darkest places to the people that almost seem unreachable. But God

is using you, a mighty man of God. And I'm sure after every transformed life it must give you something to go like, I'm right where God wants me to be.

**RENE:** Hallelujah!

**TAMMY:** Yes! I'm going to keep going. I'm not going to stop. God has given you a voice and an authority in that voice to change the world around you. Grateful for that. And haven't you started a ministry as well?

**RENE:** Yes. I started a ministry. It's called Jesus Christ Street Ministry.

**RANDY:** Very straightforward.

**RENE:** Straight up. Because it says in Colossians 3:17, whatever you do in word and deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. So I'm like, man, I do street ministry, Jesus Christ Street Ministry. It's beautiful. I had a carwash van, and I was going to sell the van. And I'm like, you know what? I'm going to make this a church on wheels. We're going to go preach the gospel in this thing. And we just drive everywhere, all the ghettos in Miami, all the way to New York, all the way to Callie, everywhere!

**RANDY:** Let me ask you this. You had some family. What's happening with your family relationships?

**RENE:** My mother is on fire for the Lord. My wife, I baptized her. They're getting fed. They see—my life, the life that I live, we're living epistles. I've got to be an example of what Christ was. Sometimes, we want to reach certain people in our families and we can't but your life, Without you even saying nothing, your life will preach to them. Because that's what it is all about. It ain't about the man just getting up there preaching the sermon. Who are you when you're alone? Who are you when no one is looking? How do you treat your animals? How do you treat your family? That's what it is all about. They've got to see Christ in you.

**RANDY:** I ask because we have a God who loves to restore and our relationship with him, our relationship with others. You've got a whole new family, now, on the streets in a lot of cases. What's happened with people that have come to Jesus through your ministry?

**RENE:** Oh, man. We fellowship, we gather. We've got a spot in Miami called Key Biscayne. It's right by the water. And we've been doing these revivals once a month. I'm talking about so many people are coming and getting baptized, deliverances taking place. It's only by the power of God. That's it!

**TAMMY:** Is that your mission? Like when you see your life five years from now, where do you see Rene and your family five years from now?

**RENE:** I just see us continue to grow. See, I've got a vision to build even like a community—a community of like ten acres and build a little community. And to bring all the people who don't got anything but really want change, really want the Lord, and come in and let's build. Let's start this. Let's build back the walls of hope like you said. Hallelujah.

**TAMMY:** That's right. Build it, transform lives, teach them the Word of God, and give them tools to go back out into the community and do something with their lives.

**RENE:** So we preach, we reach, we teach, we mend, and send. So yeah.

**RANDY:** What do you do with the people who don't receive you? I'm guessing, especially in some of these areas.

**RENE:** Yeah, sometimes they don't receive you. Sometimes.

**RANDY:** But you know that what they may be saying isn't necessarily revealing what's going on inside of them. They put up walls, they put up fronts.



**RENE:** Yep. A lot of times people put on fronts. One time, I was in a ghetto and you know, the guy was like, he started crying, the guy was broken. And he was like, "Yeah, I could receive the Lord, you know. But what am I going to do when I go back home, and my mama is on crack and there ain't no food in the fridge? How am I going to get my money?" And he's expressing himself to me.

I said, "Brother, all things are possible through Jesus Christ." Like I gave it all up. And I came to the point where I was, that's the only way I knew how to make money was by fighting professional. Because before that I was robbing and doing all the stuff that the world does when you're in the streets.

I said, "God, amen, he is opening doors for me." It is all through faith. We've got to have faith. We might go through the storm, but Jesus is on the boat. He's on the boat. He's on the boat with us.

**TAMMY:** Never alone.

**RENE:** Matthew 24 says a wise man builds his house upon a rock and when those storms come and the wind blows, and the bills come, and all these problems arise, it says you won't fold, you won't fall because you built upon the rock, on a solid foundation.

**RANDY:** What is the biggest storm you faced since coming to Christ?

**RENE:** I've had guys now get in my face in the streets and curse me out. And just to be able to walk away is so, it feels so good. The first time a guy pulled up to me in a car cursing me out, and that was the first time that had happened to me after I came to Christ, and I just grabbed my steering wheel and drove away praying. And I was liking, wow, I was able to overcome this.

**RANDY:** What would you have done before?

**RENE:** I would have taken his whole head off.

[Laughter]

But that man died. But that's what I would have did. And I thank God that I'm a new creation in Christ.

**RANDY:** So here's my question because a lot of people who watch, especially Christian television, I mean, this program will be on social media and some other places too, but you never know who is going to see it. But a lot of people who are watching the program now, they have a son, a grandson, maybe a daughter or granddaughter whom they don't have any hope for. They think man, you know, they're in the world, the world's got them. They may have addictions, they may be living a violent lifestyle, and they're watching this going, there might be hope.

What do you say to that parent or grandparent who has been praying for that child for so long and they're just on the edge of losing hope?

**RENE:** Don't stop praying. Don't stop praying because my mom never stopped praying. I remember she told me, "I would pray that your daughter would just get to see you just one more year." Because she thought I wasn't going to live. She says, "There is no way that I thought you were going to live." But she never stopped praying. She said she never stopped praying. So we've just got to keep that faith. That's the only way.

**RANDY:** It's so good. And if you've got someone in your life that you want someone to pray with you for that person, we've got a telephone number or prayer line, just call and you can agree with somebody in prayer maybe for that son or grandson, your granddaughter, whatever. If you want prayer, use that number because *LIFE Outreach International*, we love the stories, Tammy, like this, what God can do. The situation looks like it is completely beyond hope. Someone who looks like the devil's got them or

they're in a bad situation that they're never going to get out of. But we say we serve a God who is bigger than any situation out there.

There are a lot of people that are in bad situations right now. And we want to be the hands and feet of Christ and reach into these areas that you've seen, Tammy, and do something amazing. You can be a part of it. Watch this and you'll see how.

### **On the mission field**

**ANNOUNCER:** The threat most often materializes out of the blue targeting those who are innocent and unaware.

### **Open Captions**

>> One morning, my mom wasn't home. A man came to the house. He offered to take me on a trip.

**ANNOUNCER:** It appears friendly at first, but inevitably its true colors are revealed.

### **Open Captions**

>> He told me he would take good care of me. But then he threatened to kill me if I didn't come.

**ANNOUNCER:** With one final maneuver, the trap is sprung and human traffickers have snared yet another victim.

### **Open Captions**

>> He gave me a piece of candy. Then he made me walk out of my house and down the road. I don't remember much, other than seeing cars and buses, and then I passed out.

**ANNOUNCER:** Pujo was only 12 years old when this nightmare became her reality,

linking her to countless others like her who are approached, drugged, threatened, and abducted before anyone even notices. Fortunately, for Pujo Rescue Life was ready. Our ministry partners at the border intercepted her captors and pulled her from their grasp before she was sold into slavery.

### **Open Captions**

>> The next thing I remember is waking up in the hospital. They said, "You are safe... everything is going to be okay." What if they weren't there to rescue me? What would my life have been like?

### **End of video**

### **In the studio**

**TAMMY:** "You are safe. Everything is going to be okay. You're safe." Those are some pretty powerful words for those children, probably right now at this exact moment someplace in the world. I'm so grateful for this ministry, the team that's on the ground right now at those borders. They are reaching, they're rescuing, and we're restoring.

That little girl asked, "Where would my life be?" Where would their lives be?

They want a better life. If we come together, we can offer them a better life one life at a time. I know it seems enormous when you think of all the millions that are being trafficked right now, that are being abused. Let's think of that one girl right now. To be able to look at her and say, you are safe because—because we are coming for you and we're going to rescue you. We're going to take you out of that place. We're going to show you a better life. You were made for something more than this. And the enemy can't take from you one more thing from your life.

We can come together. We know how. We know how to reach these girls. We know how to rescue them. And we know how to restore them to their original identity and who they are in Christ. Randy, we've been doing this a long time. They're there right now on the

ground. They just need us to come together to make it possible for them.

**RANDY:** Absolutely. You hit it because there are three aspects of this. One is to reach and that is where we go in and we educate. We would rather prevent any sex trafficking from ever happening. So the reach goes in and speaks to that area and educates people and stops them at the border. It gets them where they're never in a position to be abused.

But unfortunately, as you know, there are many young women who are in an abusive situation and that's where we go in and rescue them. And sometimes, it means kicking down doors, literally. But spiritually, there are many to be kicked in.

And the third aspect is right out of Jeremiah. We want to give them a hope and a future and that's the restore. All of these efforts do cost money. We have people on the ground, we have facilities, we have materials that need to go out. And so we look at it and we say how many are we reaching with the overall budget? And that's how we come up with these numbers where you say, okay, it costs \$128 to reach, rescue, or restore a child.

I mean a child is not a commodity. We know this. This is what we're fighting against. But to put it in terms that we can relate to, to say, okay, how far can my dollar go? Well, actually it can be doubled right now because we have a matching gift, a \$320,000 matching gift. Some friends of the ministry have said we'll match every dollar given. Which means a gift of \$64 today will help reach, rescue, and restore one child. The more that we give, the more that we can give. The more you put in our hands, the more we can put into the field to reach, rescue, and restore.

So my prayer, Tammy, is that people would say what can I do? What does God want me to do? Because I know that this is a mission directly from God. This is a mission of heaven against hell here on earth. And we're all a part of fighting it. So would you just take a moment and say God, are you putting something on my heart to do? And it may seem small. It may seem big but all obedience is big to God. Every life changed is big to heaven.

So take a moment and pray. And then if God leads, go online and make the best gift you can. The one he puts on our heart, that's the best gift you can.

### **Begin video clip**

**ANNOUNCER:** *Innocent children and young people longing to be loved and cared for are being abducted and sold at the hands of violent predators, forced into the evil industry of human trafficking.*

*Through Mission: Rescue Life you can reach out to warn children who are at risk for sex trafficking, rescue those already enslaved, and restore young lives and give them a future. With a generous \$320,000 matching gift, now your gift of \$128 to help reach, rescue, or restore one child can be doubled to help two children. Your \$64 gift will be matched to help save one child from the horrors of human trafficking. And a \$32 mission rescue gift will be doubled to \$64.*

*With your gift today, we'll send you "Declare." This beautifully designed 31-day devotional reveals 31 names of God from scripture and gives insight into the character, grace, and the depth of God's love for you.*

*With your gift of \$128 or more, you'll receive The Gospels book set. This special edition collection of the four gospels in the classic King James version includes journaling space opposite each page of scripture so you can reflect as you read. The perfect companion for your daily time with God.*

*Finally, please consider a gift of \$1280 which will now help save 20 children. And you may request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "Consider the Birds."*

*Please call, write, or make your gift online.*

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**RANDY:** Let's reach, let's rescue, let's restore. We can only do it with your help so I hope you are going online, going to the phone, and making the best gift you can.

What a story today of reaching, rescuing, and restoring. I mean, that's just amazing. I know some people want to follow up, Renee, and find out more. Where can they follow you, see the documentary, and maybe even support you guys?

**RENE:** JesusChristStreetMinistry.com. It's simple. JesusChristStreetMinistry.com. That's the website.

**TAMMY:** Gosh, mighty man of God, thank you! Thank you for listening to the voice of God.

**RENE:** Thank y'all for having me.

**TAMMY:** Thank you so much. And I hope today that you're able to listen even a little bit more. Lean into the voice of God. He wants to build back hope in your life. It is capable. He is capable. Your life was meant for something more than just this. God bless you. Thank you for watching. We'll see you next time on *Life Today*.